



Module 1

Women in Agri-Food



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1. Introduction



1.1 AWARE project introduction

What is the AWARE project?

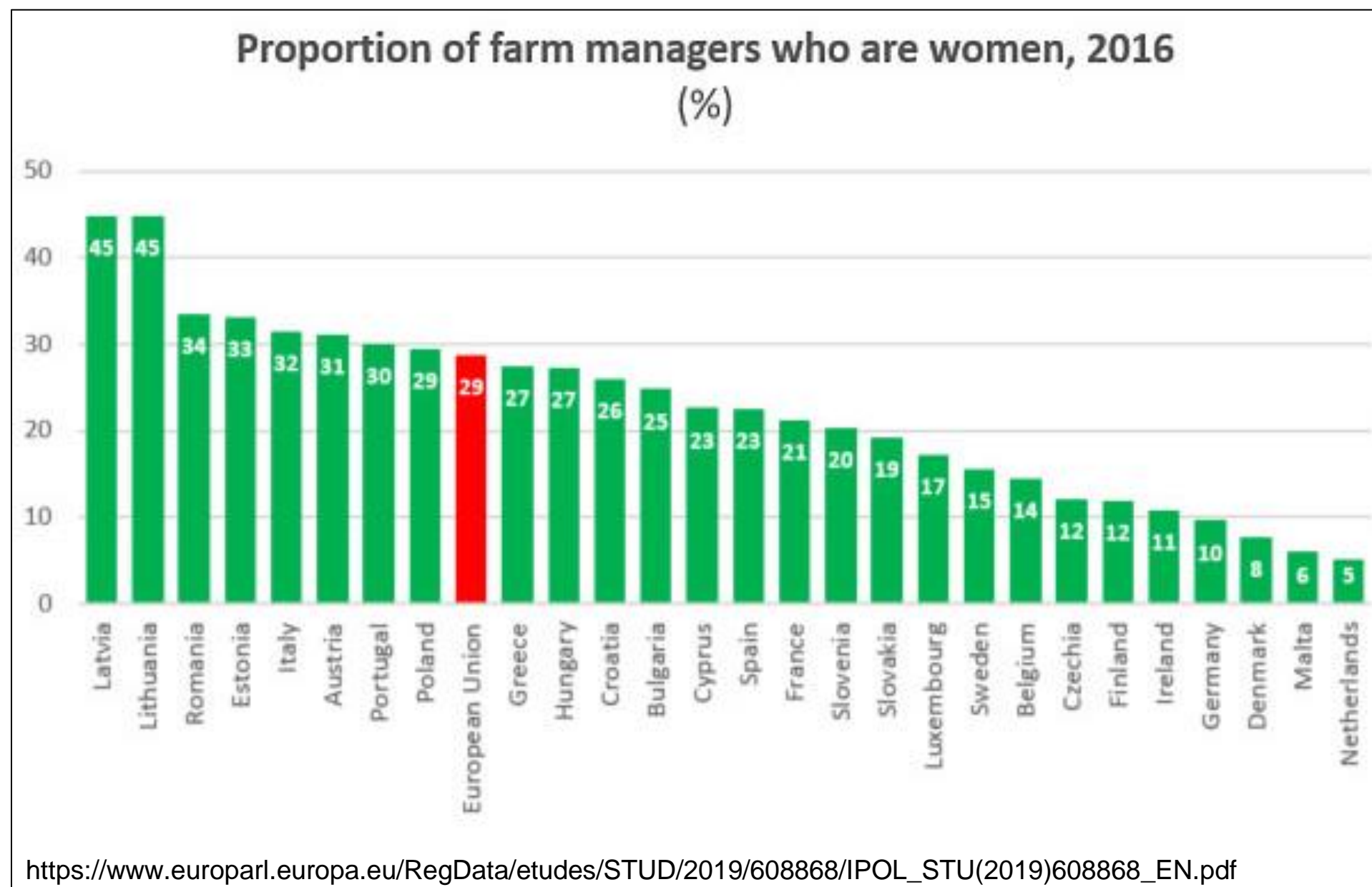
Advancing **W**omen in **A**gri-Food **R**ural **E**nvironments is an Erasmus+ funded project.

The project will aim to evolve and support the growth of the women's entrepreneurial activity in the Agri-Food sector across Europe. **(Want to learn more about the project? Have look on the slide notes)**

Who are the project partners?

Project Coordinator: ATU; Partners: Macra na Feirme; University of Bedfordshire; Propel; Cia Toscana; The Polish Farm Advisory and Training Centre Not-For-Profit

1.2 Farming-gender specific data



- Eurostat data show that around 30% of the farms across the EU are managed by women, with the highest share in Latvia and Lithuania (45%) and the lowest (5-6%) in the Netherlands and Malta.
- Women in rural areas of the EU make up below 50% of the total rural population, they represent 45% of the economically active population, and about 40% of them work on family farms.
- According to this, their participation through informal rural economy might not be statistically recognized.

1.3 Agri-food sector-gender specific data

Although women make up 52% of the total European population, only 34% of the European Union (EU) self-employed and 30% of start-up entrepreneurs are women.

- Less than 30% of farm managers are women,
- Less than 23% are women farm managers under 40

Further information about the main challenges and obstacles of women is available in the slide notes. Additionally, some of these aspects will be investigated throughout this module.



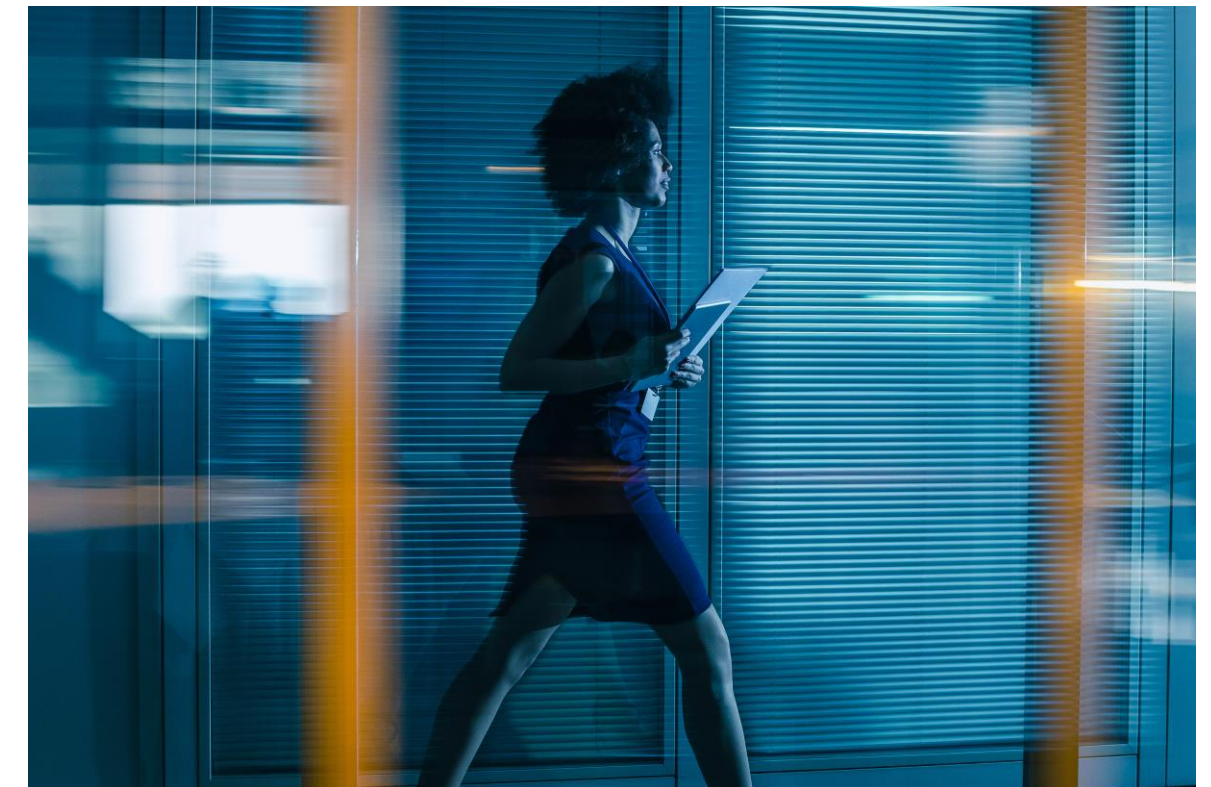
2. Women in Agri-Food

2.1 Gender-specific barriers for women in agri-food

Woman startups are performing well but underfunded. Furthermore, gender segregation leads to male-dominated fields.

Main obstacles for women in the agri-food business are:

- Lack of access to land,
- Limited financing opportunities,
- Gender bias,
- Sometimes they are offered less suitable working conditions,
- It may be harder for them to keep the work-life balance as they often feel more pressure than males to be responsible for household and familial tasks



2.1 Gender-specific obstacles women encounter in the Agri-Food sector

2.1.1 Gender bias

“Women’s access to assets and resources key to agrifood systems – such as land, inputs, services, finance and digital technology – continues to lag behind men” (FAO, 2022)

- **Role in the job sector:** women are more likely than men to work in the overall informal economy, especially in agriculture;
- **Unemployment rate:** in the rural areas unemployment rate is higher for the women rather than the man (7,1% vs 7.6%);
- **Expected salary:** women’s gross hourly earnings are on average 16.2% lower than those of men in the EU-27.





2.1.2 Life-work balance

- Woman often have to find compromise between economic and social activities – practising time-management and time-blocking activities helps this.
- 16.9% of women in the European Union in 2019 reported that they were not seeking employment because of care responsibilities.
- Yet, there is the unique opportunity for farming mothers to spend time with children on a farm and to share the knowledge.





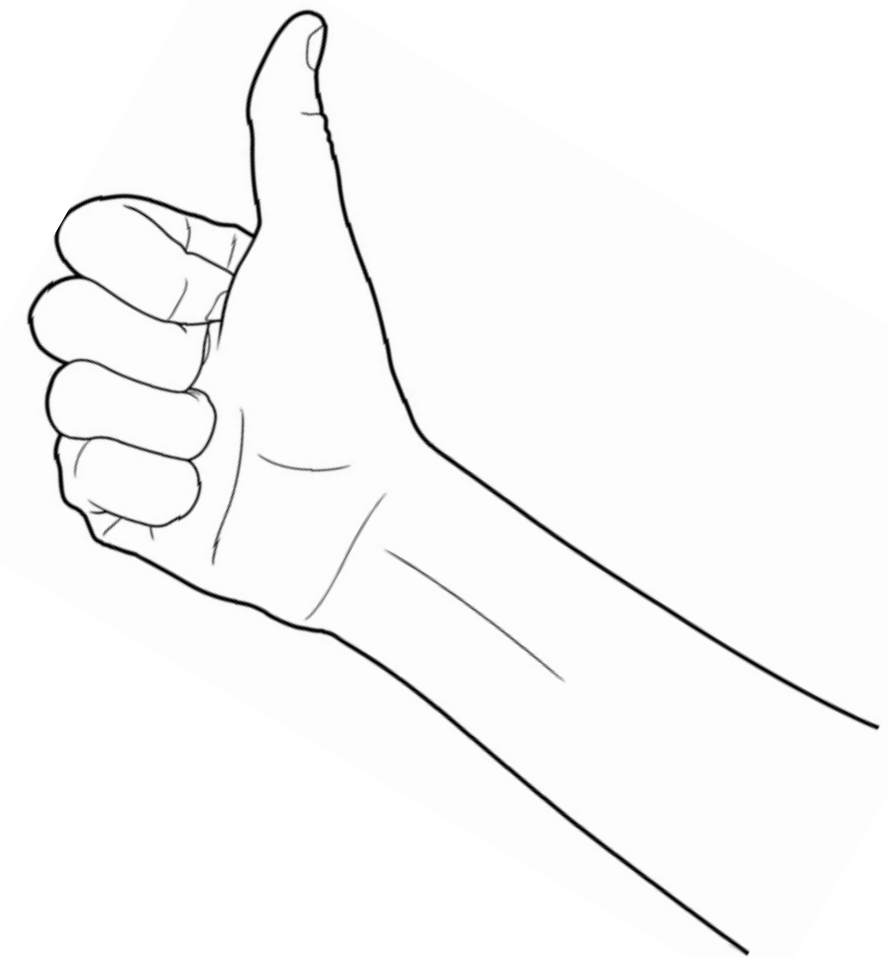
2.1.3 Finance

- Women often have limited access to the loans and lack collateral (which is usually the land).
- It is estimated that if women had the same access to productive resources as men, they could increase yields on their farms by 20- 30% and raise total agricultural outputs. 30% of farms across the EU are managed by women and women take more calculated risks than men, yet it is still difficult for woman farmers to access loans.



2.2 Strengths of woman entrepreneurs in the Agri-Food sector

- Women can be at the forefront of innovation and diversification in rural areas by developing new activities, products and services.
- Women often have the added advantage of an awareness and knowledge of local needs, and specific interpersonal and communication skills.
- EU countries must focus on female entrepreneurship in the agri-food sector in order to establish gender-specific barriers and develop counteractive policies and procedures.



2.2.1 Soft skills: Communication skills

- Communication is the ability to clearly and successfully speak, write and articulate messages.
- Successful communication helps us better understand people and situations.
- Good communication is also about understanding instructions and asking questions.
- Many women tend to underestimate their abilities and qualification.
- It's important to recognize one's skills and traits – and embrace them.



2.2.2 Soft skills: Networking

- Networking is as a socioeconomic business activity.
- It helps to recognize or create business opportunities, share information, seek potential partners and look for new opportunities.



2.2.3 Soft skills: Mentoring

- Mentoring is a collaborative at-will relationship.
- In this relationship, there are two participating sides:
 - a mentor – senior employee; the teacher
 - a mentee – junior employee; the student.
- The purpose of mentoring is the mentee's growth, learning, and career development.
- Benefits reported by mentors include: satisfaction from their job, strengthening of interpersonal skills; and continuing to experience new ideas and insights.



2.2.4 Soft skills: Empowerment

- Empowerment occurs in terms of sense of self-worth and ability to influence the direction of social change.
- Tools of achieving empowerment include: education, training, awareness raising, building self-confidence, expansion of choices, control over resources.
- When it comes to empowerment in farming, it is worth focusing on: decision making on agricultural products, ownership and control over resources and income.



3. How to develop Agri-Food business related

For practical purposes we can divide farm products into three categories:

- **Commodities:** are crops and livestock that are raised and harvested to provide food and sometimes fuel;
- **Final consumer goods:** these products come from the transformations of commodities and are ready to be consume;
- **Services:** doing something for customers but not producing goods.

In the past farm businesses were mainly related to commodities (e.g. milk) production, recently among Europe a new agriculture has grown between farmers, more farmers have started to produce also final consumer goods (e.g. cheese) and services (e.g. cheese production courses). These strategy is known as multifunctional agriculture.

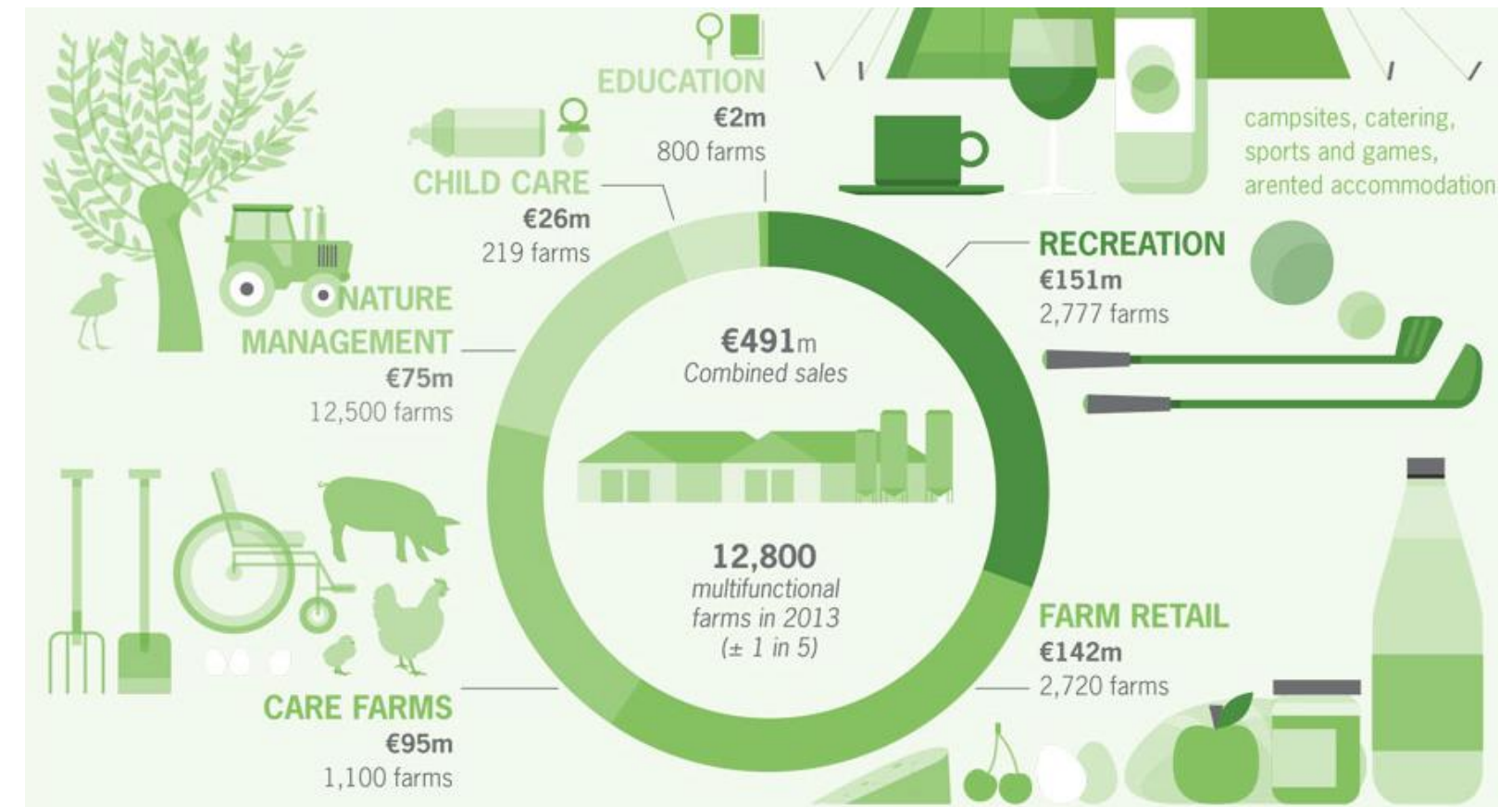


3.1 Multifunctional farm

Multifunctional agriculture is an umbrella term used to indicate companies that combine their agricultural production and environment with **services to society**:

- care farming and farm education;
- farm shops/short chains or farm markets,
- agricultural nature management;
- agrotourism.

Key to these services is the relationship between farms and civilians/consumers. In other words, multifunctional agriculture is the reconnection of agriculture to society.



Value of multifunctional agriculture in The Nederland (Wageningen University, 2013)

3. 2 Opportunities for women in the agri-food sector

- You can run a successful restaurant, serving dishes prepared with ingredients straight from your farm. Many people would appreciate the opportunity to eat fresh, healthy food while being surrounded by calm and green village landscapes. You can expand your offerings by providing a reception hall or renting conference rooms for business meetings.
- In addition to the restaurant, you can provide accommodation. These two things perfectly complement each other,
- While running an agritourism farm, why not start a mini zoo, appealing especially to kids. If some beautiful landscapes are located nearby, that would create a perfect arrangement for photo sessions. Especially newly-weds would consider that an interesting option.





3.2.1 Agritourism (I)

The Polish Tourism Organisation is a government agency supporting legal entities dealing with tourism, that cooperates with regional and local tourism organisations.



In the western Poland, you can find „Nad Warta” - a guest house based right next to the Warta river. It is located very close to the Notecka forest, far from any other buildings. Because of that it's a paradise for people that love the country side and want to spend a peaceful time.



3.2.1 Agritourism (II)

Amongst several forms of on-farm diversification, agritourism is often indicated as having “development” potential for farms and rural areas.

Main characteristics of agritourism:

- **Accommodation:** the environments may vary, however many agritourism host their guests in characteristic rooms (often former hays or shelters) furnishing them with a style in harmony with the rural context.
- **Activity promoted:** workshops, tastings or horseback riding are just some of the activities that can be organized within the agritourism.
- **Meals:** the food prepared and served inside the agritourism is almost always from the farm or locals and reflects local traditions.



3.2.2 Food-related opportunities

World's Best woman Chef (2017) Ana Roš is at the helm of the restaurant in Slovenia's Soča Valley. The seasonal menu may feature dishes such as pasta filled with apricots, preserved beets and roasted lamb. In the restaurant you can also taste homemade, traditional cheese and rare, vintage Slovenian wines. Seafood comes from Soda Ana's favorite local fishermen, and all produce is sourced from the restaurant's garden and nearby farms. There are also 10 guest rooms in the property.



Photo by Susan Grabrijan



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3.2.3 Educational and Social farming (I)

Educational Farms offer individualized educational programmes, resulting from the farm profile and the passion of the host farmers. The visitors participate in the shows and during one-day event or longer visits with overnight stays.

For example;

During your stay on the island of Crete or in Western Mani in the Peloponnesse, you can attend a 2 hours long honey making workshop - The Bee Garden Workshop. If you stay for a longer time, you can attend a series of beekeeping seminars.



agriwomenuaware.eu



3.2.3 Educational and Social farming (II)



Educational and social farms represent another example of multifunctional agriculture. It is important for these farmers to develop their communication skills as they may be socializing with a diverse range of individuals (children, individuals with health conditions or impairments). These initiatives should help them to go deeper into rural agro-ecosystem.

Educational Farms are unexpected natural laboratories and active pedagogical settings complementing the school, according to this teachers can use them for their educational purposes.

Social Farming activity, on the other side, involves and promotes young disadvantaged people of being integrated in a living context, where their personal capabilities may be valued and enhanced.

Social farms plays and important role for the society and has been adopted by several countries as a form of social service to the community.

3.3 Business plan introduction (I)

(see also Module 2 to learn more about Marketing relate to Food enterprise)

A **Business Plan (BP)** is a document that formalizes the strategy that the company intends to adopt, the objectives pursued and the actions to be taken over a given time frame.

It is also a planning document that explains the company's development trajectories.

The aim of the **BP** is to verify the effectiveness and efficiency of the actions carried out associated with a business. In the **BP** should be outlined the **financial resources** that must be found to develop the **business idea**.



3.3 Business Plan Introduction (II)

Business plan main goals:

- Provide essential information for starting the business: what and how many economic, financial and human resources are required, what are the characteristics of the product and the market, what are the competitors, who are the typical customers, etc.;
- Give to the entrepreneur a global vision of the factors that move the company (basis for strategic planning);
- Emphasize the original idea of the new enterprise;
- Verify the interest of potential customers with data and analysis;
- Set objectives and monitoring points;
- Verify the consistency of business idea with an income-cost analysis and income-expenditure ratios;
- Define the legal form of the business;
- Formulate reliable forecasts about the business.

4. Introduction to mentorship

- Mentorship can provide many benefits for both mentors and their mentees.
- Sharing knowledge between people operating within a similar sector is a very effective way of teaching and gives mentees a true insight into the profession.
- Becoming a mentor is a very rewarding activity, as it gives experienced entrepreneurs the opportunity to share their knowledge and support individuals who are beginning their entrepreneurial journey as they encounter common obstacles and challenges within the profession.
- Mentorship relationships can be built through personal connections or formal mentorship programs.



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